

Message Text

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42

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SUBJ: THE COLOMBIAN POLIT SCENE: ACTIVITY AND SPECULATION INCREASE

REF BOGOTA A-122 JUNE 20/74

1. SUMMARY: THE TEMPO OF POLIT ACTIVITY IN COLOMBIA IS ON THE UPSWING AFTER A NEARLY THREE MONTH HIATUS FOLLOWING THE APRIL 21/74 ELECTIONS. LIBERAL PARTY CHIEF JULIO CESAR TURBAY AYALA AFTER A TWO MONTH WORLD WIDE TOUR RETURNED TO BOGOTA JULY 13 AMID SPECULATION ABOUT HIS POLIT ROLE DURING THE LOOEZ ADMIN. PRES-ELECT LOPEZ RETURNS TO COLOMBIA ON OR ABOUT JULY 29, THUS MISSING THE OPENING OF CONGRESS JULY 20 AND THE LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION JULY 26. SENATOR GUSTAVO BALCAZAR BELIEVES CONGRESS WILL BE MORE ACTIVE THAN PREVIOUSLY, BUT LONG TRADITION OF CONGRESSIONAL LASSITUDE WILL BE HARD TO OVERCOME. END OF SUMMARY.

2. TURBAY'S TOUR AS THE PARTY'S MAXIMUM LEADER STILL HAS ONE YEAR TO RUN. HOWEVER, PRIOR TO RETURNING TO BOGOTA, TURBAY ANNOUNCED IN NEW YORK THAT HE WAS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN PARTY UNITY AND THEREFORE FAVORED A PLURALISTIC PARTY LEADERSHIP INCLUDING THE SEVERAL CURRENTS OF LIBERAL THOUGHT. THE NEW LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY WILL BE ELECTED AT THE EXTRAORDINARY LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION

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SCHEDULED FOR JULY 26. WHILE SOME MEMBERS OF THE PARTY HAVE CALLED

FOR A POSTPONJMENT OF THE CONVENTION, TURBAY MET WITH THE ALTERNATE DIRECTORS OF THE PARTY ON JULY 14 AND ANNOUNCED THAT THE CONVENTION WOULD GO ON AS SCHEDULED UNLESS PRES-ELECT LOPEZ SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED A DELAY.

3. TURBAY'S OFFER TO STEP DOWN AS THE PARTY'S MAXIMUM CHIEF PROBABLY STEMS FROM HIS RECOGNITION THAT LOPEZ WILL BE THE REAL LEADER OF THE PARTY, AT LEAST FOR THE EARLY PART OF HIS ADMIN, NO MATTER WHO HOLDS THE TITLE. TURBAY MAY BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NEW PARTY DIRECTORATE. BY EITHER SHARING THE LEADERSHIP OR STEPPING OUT ALTOGETHER, TURBAY WILL BE MORE FREE TO FOSTER HIS OWN FORTUNES, WHICH FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE CENTER ON HIS DESIRE TO BE DESIGNADO - THE PERSON WHO FILLS IN FOR THE PRES IN CASE OF THE LATTER'S ABSENCE FROM THE COUNTRY OR INCAPACITATION. IN ADDITION, TURBAY IS THE PRIME CANDIDATE FOR FORNMIN OR PRES OF THE SENATE. SENATOR GUSTAVO BALCAZAR TOLD THE EMB JULY 11 THAT TURBAY WILL PROBABLY OPT FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SENATE. HE SAID TURBAY BELIEVES LOPEZ WILL PROBABLY BE HIS OWN FORNMIN. IN ADDITION, BALCAZAR SAID, AS SENATE LEADER TURBAY WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO GUIDE LEGISLATION THROUGH THE CONGRESS, WHICH WOULD ENHANCE TURBAY'S OWN IMAGE IN THE PROCESS. NEVERTHELESS, BALCAZAR SAID HE HAD NOT COMPLETELY RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT TURBAY MIGHT BECOME FORNMIN, BUT HIS MAY BE BECAUSE BALCAZAR WOULD ALSO LIKE TO BE SENATE PRES.

4. CONCERNING THE ROLE OF THE CONGRESS WHICH CONVENES JULY 20, BALCAZAR WHO HEADS A BI PARTITE COMMISSION TO ORGANIZE THE VARIOUS PERMANENT COMMITTEES, TOLD THE EMB THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD BE AN ACTION ORIENTED INSTITUTION. HE SAID THAT MANY BILLS DESIRED BY LOPEZ ARE ALREADY BEING PREPARED FOR INTRODUCTION PRIOR TO LOPEZ' INAUGURATION. HE THOUGHT THAT WITH THE STRONG LIBERAL MAJORITY IN THE CONGRESS AND LOPEZ' OVERWHELMING VICTORY IN APR, LOPEZ WOULD NEITHER NEED NOR REQUEST EXTRAORDINARY POWERS IN ORDER TO PUT HIS PROGRAM INTO ACTION QUICKLY. BALCAZAR SAID THAT THE LIBERALS WILL HAVE NEARLY 60 PERCENT OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF EACH COMMITTEE.

5. BALCAZAR'S OPTIMISM ABOUT AN ACTIVE ROLE FOR THE CONGRESS DURING THE LOPEZ ADMIN IS OPEN TO QUESTION, AT LEAST FOR THE SHORT TERM. AS REPORTED REF AG, THE CONGRESS HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE FOR MANY YEARS ANDCHANGES WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO IMPLEMENT.
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INTHE INTERIM, THE CONGRESS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE TO RELY, AS IN THE PAST, ON EXECUTIVE INITIATIVES AND INFO. HOWEVER IF IT IS TRUE AS BALCAZAR CLAIMS THAT LEGISLATION LOPEZ WANTS IS ALREADY BEING PREPARED BY COMMITTEES, LOPEZ MAY NOT NEED TO ASK FOR EXTRAORDINARY POWERS FROM THE CONGRESS.

6. BALCAZAR SAID THAT HIS COMMISSION IS DRAFTING AN AMENDMENT TO RTICLE 80 OF THE CONSTITUTION TO REDUCE CONSIDERABLY THE NUMBER OF

CONGRESSMEN, NOW ONE SENATOR AND REP FROM EACH DEPT, SERVING ON THE PLANNING COMMISSION. THIS COMMISSION, WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC EXPENDITURES HAS NEVER FUNCTIONED, ACCORDING TO BALCAZAR, BECAUSE OF ITS UNWIDELY SIZE AND UNDER THE NATIONAL FRONT SYSTEM, THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE MEMBERS BE EVENLY DIVIDED BETWEEN THE CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL PARTIES. BALCAZAR ADMITTED THE MOUNTING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION WOULD TAKE TIME SINCE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS REQUIRE THE APPROVAL OF TWO CONGRESSES (TWO YEARS) AND THE PROBLEM OF REGIONAL AND POLIT REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMISSION WAS STILL TO BE WORKED OUT.

7. BALCAZAR SAID THE LIBERALS WERE TAKING A CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CONSERVATIVE AND EVEN THE ANAPO PARTY. HE SAID THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF EACH HOUSE WILL INCLUDE CONSERVATIVES AS VICE PRESIDENTS AND THAT ANAPO WOULD PROBABLY BE GIVEN SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION IN THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP. HE THOUGHT THAT AT LEAST SOME ANAPISTAS WOULD RETURN TO EITHER THE CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL PARTIES DURING THE NEXT YEAR BECAUSE THEY RECOGNIZE THAT ANAPO IS NO LONGER A VIABLE POLIT BASE.

8. THE INCREASE IN POLIT ACTIVITY HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASED SPECULATION IN THE PRESS PARTICULARLY ABOUT POSSIBLE CABINET MINISTERS. BALCAZAR SAID, HOWEVER, THAT LOPEZ HAS NOT REVEALED HIS CHOICES AND THAT WHAT IS APPEARING IN THE PRESS IS THE EXPRESSION OF INDIVIDUAL WISHES TO BE NAMED BY LOPEZ, WITHOUT ANY FIRM FOUNDATION.

9. ACCORDING TO SENATOR INDALECIO LIEVANO, A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF THE PRES-ELECT AND ONE OF THE PARTY'S ALTERNATE DIRECTORS, LOPEZ IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO COLOMBIA ON OR ABOUT JULY 29 THUS MISSING THE OPENING OF CONGRESS AND THE PARTY CONVENTION. THERE ARE ALSO PRESS REPORTS STATING THAT HE MAY MEET NAITH
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VENEZUELAN PRES PEREZ AND MEXICAN PRES ECHEVERRIA IN CARACS PRIOR TO HIS RETURN. THE PRES-ELECT IS SCHEDULED TO GIVE A MAJOR SPEECH AUG 2 AT A RECEPTION HONORING HIM. WHILE HE MAY PROVIDE A LITTLE INSIGHT INTO HIS PLANS FOR THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF HIS ADMIN. IT IS EXPECTED THAT HE WILL WAIT UNTIL HIS INAUGURATION SPEECH TO LAY OUT HIS PROGRAM.

10. MEANWHILE ON JULY 14 THE ELECTORAL COURT RELEASED THE OFFICIAL FINAL TALLY FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THE FINAL VOTE IS AS FOLLOWS: TOTAL VOTES 5,174,224; FOR LOPEZ (LIBERAL), 2,911,292; GOMEZ (CONSERVATIVE), 1,630,004; ROJAS DE MORENO (ANAPO), 490,530; ECHEVERRIA (UNO), 136,736; AND DUARTE (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT), 5,657.
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